

Inside out

Pages 3

*Captain Murphy's
Thanksgiving
Holiday message to
families & crew*

Page 7

*Tarawa Supply
Dept. finalist for
prestigious NEY
Award*

Page 2-4

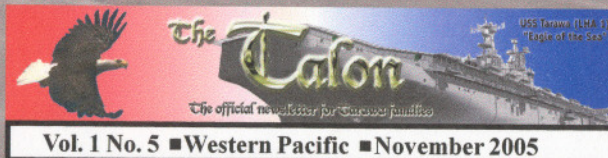
*Halloween at sea,
"Tarawa Terrors"
haunted house*

Tarawa departments compete for coveted Captain's Cup



See pages 5-6

Photo by PHAN Shannon Garcia



Vol. 1 No. 5 ■ Western Pacific ■ November 2005

The Talon

is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of *The Talon* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or DoD. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the USS Tarawa LHA-1, Public Affairs Office. Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Friday, a week before publication (the last Friday of each month). The public affairs staff reserves the right to edit all submissions to journalistic standards. All photos are official photos unless otherwise noted. Acceptance of input by the public affairs staff does not guarantee publication.

Captain Peter D. Murphy.....*Commanding Officer*

Lieutenant Jennifer Mitchell.....*Public Affairs Officer*

Editorial Staff

JOC(SW/AW) Gabriel Puello.....*Editor*

PH1 (AW/SW) Marvin Harris.....*Photo Editor*

JO3 Adam Stapleton & JO3 David Perea.....*Staff Writers*

LI2(SW/AW) Richard Perez.....*Layout Design*

Tarawa becomes house of terrors this Halloween



HM2 Clay Hamilton, also known as Dr. Giggles, smiles at his suffering patients. **Photo** by PHAN(AW) Shannon Garcia.

By LI3 Elena Velesquez

It was a story involving injured Marines and Sailors dying of a

mysterious illness, only to later return to life as

See **Halloween**

Page 3



To all USS TARAWA crew and embarked commands,

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday, a time when we gather with friends and family to share in the many blessings for which we have to be thankful. This holiday season, we find ourselves at sea, executing our mission and fighting a war on global terrorism. I know that you will miss your families and friends on Thanksgiving, and likewise they will miss you. On this special day, we will all share an emotional bond with our loved ones back home.

On Thanksgiving Day, all of us will have the opportunity to gather together as a shipboard family. Take the time to think about your families back home but also enjoy the chance to celebrate this unique American traditional dinner with your TARAWA shipmates.

I want to extend my personal gratitude to all and give thanks to the many dedicated men and women on board USS TARAWA for your dedication and superb performance in protecting and defending the citizens of our great Nation. XO, Command Master Chief and I wish all of you and your loved ones a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

PETER D. MURPHY
CAPTAIN, US NAVY
Commanding Officer
USS TARAWA (LHA 1)

Halloween

from Page 2

zombies to feast on the flesh of the living; of a Doctor going mad and dismembering his patients. This may sound like the trailer to a big budget Hollywood horror film, it was actually the concept behind Tarawa's Haunted House.

In celebration of Halloween, Tarawa's Medical Department went all out in preparing a Haunted House for the crew and embarked personnel aboard USS TARAWA while at sea in the Arabian Gulf. "We spent about two months planning the Haunted House," said Lt Cmdr. Vincent DeCicco, lead medical officer and resident

See **Halloween**

Page 4

Halloween

from Page 3

“Mad Doctor” for the haunted house. “It took a committee of volunteering officers and enlisted from several different departments to make this happen,” added Decicco.

Willing victims to the terrors of Tarawa’s Haunted House were lead in small groups through the maze of horrors that the medical ward became that night. Participants were lead through the maze of horrors in small groups, introducing the story that medical had set in motion days in advance over SITE TV broadcasts and 1-MC announcements, said Lt. Jaime Baratta, medical officer and wicked witch.

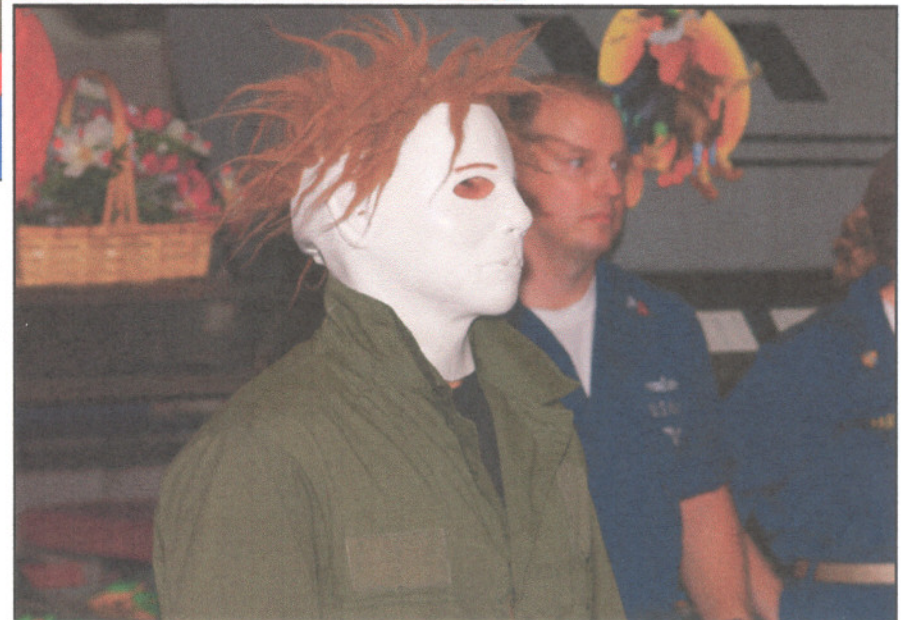
From a silhouetted nurse torturing a patient, to



CO, XO and (acting) CMC, with costume contest best. Lt.Cdr. Devon Shoquist, IT2 (SW/AW) Alayna Kremer, and AN (AW) Alex Garcia. Photo by PHAN (AW/SW) Kelly Morgan.

screaming victims of zombies, haunted house cast members drew their ideas from several different influences. “The whole committee drew influences

from various horror movies and past experiences visiting Haunted Houses,” said Decicco. This would appear to be the reason why the Tarawa House of Terror was such a resounding success and fun for the entire crew.



Department's vie for coveted Captain's Cup

By JO3 David Perea

AT SEA ABOARD USS TARAWA IN THE ARABIAN SEA—As Tarawa arrived about the halfway point of deployment, the crew broke the monotony of the days at sea with an old Navy tradition, the Captain's Cup, from November 11 to the 13.

When one day becomes less distinguishable from the next, the morale of the crew may suffer, making activities such as the Captain's Cup such an important part of mission accomplishment, enhance a healthy sense of competition and fun.

"Every one in the Navy has an inherent desire to be successful. The

Captain's Cup Competition allows us to test what we're good at and it sharpens our competitive nature.

People, who participate in Captain's Cup events, are being competitive because they get to do something fun with people that they already know," said Fire Controlman Chief Petty Officer George Melonas, Tarawa's Captain's Cup Coordinator.



AVCM Gerardo Fernando tries to catch Lt. Cdr. Mark Dover before the finish line of the 1.5 mile relay run held on the flight deck during captains cup events on November 12, 2005. Photo by PHAN(AW/SW) Kelly A. Morgan.

According to Melonas, the Captain's Cup tradition may be recounted as far back as the days of wooden ship's

See **Captains Cup**

Page 6

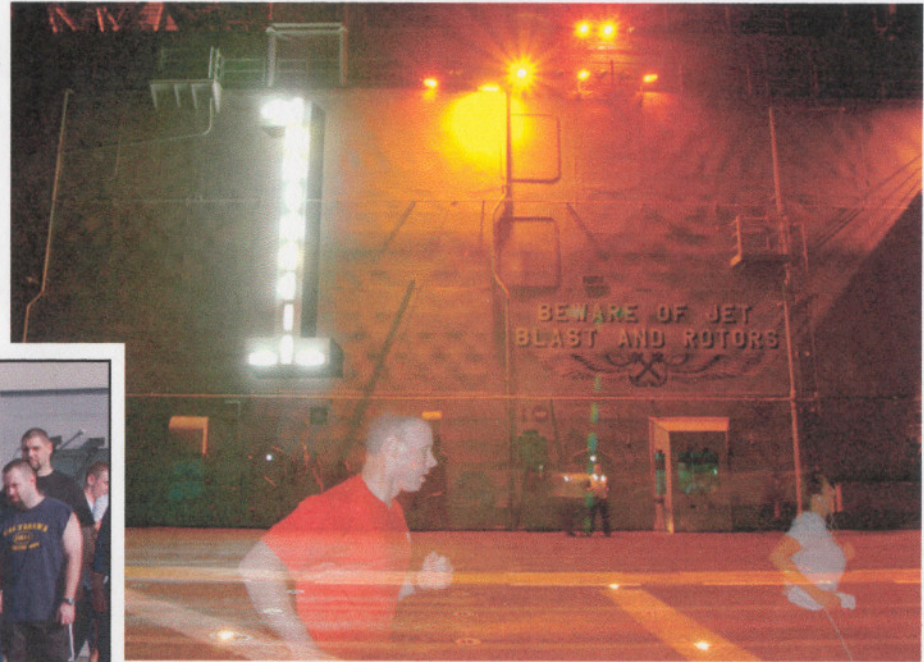
Captains Cup

from Page 5

when from time to time, the Captain would permit the crew to open up a barrel of grog, which was a very strong alcohol that wouldn't spoil.

"They had to share the

grog and the thought of having to drink from the bottom of the barrel motivated the crew to see who will get to drink first. This had a tendency to bring out the extreme side of man's competitive nature," said Melonas.



Above: Capt. Murphy joins crewmembers in the Night Flight Deck Fun Run during the second evening of the TARAWA's Captain's Cup Competition, 2005. Left: ABM2 Jerry Lowe participates in the 40 pound seabag relay on the flight deck Photo by PHAN (AW) Shannon K. Garcia

The Captain sailors. The Captains Cup was granted the use of one always held by the most capable and wine cup for the strongest sailor to maintain order dispensing of the drink to his most motivated and deserving of

See **Captains Cup**
Page 7



Engineering Department, the Captain's Cup Champions, exult in their victory as Lt. Cdr. Laredo Bell, CHENG holds up their trophy and pose with Capt. Murphy. Photo by PH3(AW/SW) Anthony Spiker.

CAPTAIN'S CUP 2005 FINAL STANDINGS

First Place- Engineering 100pts

Second Place- Air Dept. 80pts

Third Place- Operations 60pts (AIMD also finished with 60pts but lost tug-o-war tie-breaker versus Ops)

Captains Cup

from Page 6

as the drink was parceled out, and it still remains synonymous with competition and good sportsmanship today, says Melonas.

As events were later implemented in the tradition and evolved over the years, some of the events this time around may be a far cry from the events of the more formative years of the Captain's Cup. Such events as a video game competition, volley ball tournament and sea bag relay race weren't seen as far back as the Navy's era of wooden ships, but still helped in maintaining the virtues of sportsmanship and motivation.

As teams were formed from departments, the crew also had the opportunity to compete in a two-mile relay run, push-up and sit-up contest as well as tug-of-war.

Tarawa supply is finalist for Navywide big-deck NEY Award

By LI3 Elena Velesquez &
JO3 Adam Stapleton

BAHRAIN -Commander Naval Surface Force Pacific (SURFPAC), recently nominated the culinary specialist's aboard USS TARAWA LHA-1, for the coveted Ney award, for their artistry and skill in their field of endeavor.

The Ney award is one of the highest honors a crewman can receive in the culinary field. "The Ney is really hard to win, just like the super bowl," said CS3 Keevan Haines, culinary specialist. "It's the food



Cdr. Mike McPeak, SUPPO, CWO2 Cesar Valencia, Ney Award inspector and CS2 Jaqueline Garcia, review Tarawa's books during the judging phase of competition. Photo by PH3 Anthony Spiker.

competition award for best food service operations afloat and ashore," added LCDR Eric

and technical development skills."

Tarawa is the only west coast ship of its class to be nominated for the "Ney". "They're (judges), looking at the finalists on each coast for this award," said Oxendine. "After our inspection, they'll go to the east coast amphibious assault ship, which is USS Bataan."

There's a lot of work that goes into preparing for their inspection. "Right

See **Ney**

Page 10

Oxendine, Tarawa's assistant supply officer. "It ranges from customer service, sanitation

Big T Helps People for the Love, and Joy

BAHRAIN- The USS TARAWA(LHA 1) Religious Ministry Team coordinated two COMREL projects for the crew during the ship's recent visit in port Bahrain thanks to the outstanding assistance and support of the Commander Fifth Fleet Chaplain's Office.

One project took place at the RIA School for Autistic Children in Bahrain for which there was 17 volunteers. This was a work project during which much of the school's property was cleaned up and miscellaneous items were re-organized for better usage. In addition, three TARAWA artists painted large wall murals which fronted a playground at the school. The other project



Standing: Cdr. Randal Craft, Lt. Robert Keener, ABH1 Kenneth Confer, Mrs. Christine Gordon, MMFN Domingo Licon, AT2 Cuong Phung, MMFN Timothy Fagan, MMFN Kevin Hancock, SH2 Jose Alzaga, RP1 Jeffrey Schadler. Kneeling: MM1 Phoutone Chanthithanam, QM1 Justo Diazchala, AT3 David Keller, EN3 Anita Dulay, HM3 Syrilann Coor, HM3 Erin Owens Right: Father "Bob" does it like Ditka.

was a soccer match with a local Bahraini community team for which there was 11 volunteers. TARAWA's soccer team gave up

the match (lost by one point) in the name of boosting foreign relations with the

Bahraini people! "Actually, it was a very close game to the end and during the final minute the Bahraini team squeaked out a goal," said Cdr. Randal Craft, chaplain. Needless to say, TARAWA's community outreach volunteer team enthusiastically desires a rematch during its next visit to Bahrain.



Ney
from Page 8

now I'm working on maintenance, making sure everything runs properly," said Haines. "Everything has to be perfect."

According to Haines, the Tarawa supply department has been ready for this and plans on taking the prize home, when asked about the upcoming inspection by Commander Naval Supply Systems Command representatives.

The judging representatives arrived on Tarawa while the ship was in port Bahrain, to conduct their inspection. The results of the competition will not be known until sometime in March.

Sailors Recognized



Aviation Ordnance man Third Class Ryan Sharf receives a Navy Achievement Medal from Captain Peter D. Murphy on November 4th, 2005. Over thirty sailors were recognized that day for outstanding performance of their duties during the Tarawa's Western Pacific Cruise. Photo by -PH3 Anthony Spiker

CSSN Ruth Anne Barwick



Service: U.S.Navy

Organization: Supply

Duty Title: Cook

Hobbies: Singing, Socializing, Baking

Favorite Duty Station: USS TARAWA

LHA-1 (I like the people I work with)

Career Highlights: Cooking up in the Wardroom for the officers.

AN Daniel Cancino



Service: U.S. Navy

Organization: Air

Duty Title: Aviation Boatswain Mate

Hobbies: Playing the drums, surfing, snow boarding, fishing

Favorite Duty Station: This is my first duty station.

Career Highlights: Being able to play with my band on the ship after work.

ADAN (AW) Andrae Clarke



Service: U.S. Navy

Organization: AIMD

Duty Title: Aviation Machinist Mate

Hobbies: Playing Basketball, soccer, video games and listening to music

Favorite Duty Station: This One, because of the great environment and chain of command

Career Highlights: Striking into my rate.

COOL PIC

Damage Controlman Third Class (SW/AW) Matthew Hafner demonstrates the proper use of the Portable Exothermic Cutting Unit (PECU) in the hangar bay of the USS TARAWA during General Quarters training on November 11, 2005. TARAWA is the flagship for Expeditionary Strike Group One (ESG-1), currently on a regularly scheduled Western Pacific deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo by PH2 (AW) Larry S. Carlson

